

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ANTIOQUIAN LIBERAL PARTY DIRECTORATE DECLARES ITS
NEUTRALITY, CONTRADICTING LOPEZ MICHELSEN CLAIM

1. IN ALFONSO LOPEZ MICHELSEN' S REPLY (SEPTTEL FROM AMEMB BOGOTA)
TO CARLOS LLERAS' PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL COALITION
CANDIDATE
FOR THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, LOPEZ MADE THREE REFERENCES
TO SUPPORT FOR HIS OWN CANDIDACY BY THE MAJORITY OF THE LIBERAL
PARTY DIRECTORATE OF ANTIOQUIA (DLA). LOPEZ WAS REFERRING TO
AN APRIL 14 DECLARATION BY THIRTEEN MEMBERS (INCLUDING REPEAT INCLU-
DING SUPLENTES OR ALTERNATE MEMBERS) OF THE DLA PROCLAIMING
SUPPORT FOR LOPEZ' CANDIDACY.

2. THE DLA IS COMPOSED OF ELEVEN PRINCIPAL MEMBERS EACH WITH
AN ALTERNATE. THUS, A COMBINATION OF THIRTEEN PRINCIPALS AND AL-
TERNATES MIGHT IN A SENSE BE CONSIDERED A MAJORITY OF THE TOTAL
OF TWENTY- TWO PRINCIPALS AND ALTERNATES. HOWEVER, OF THE THRI-
TEEN SIGNATORS OF THE APRIL 14 DECLARATION, FIVE ARE PRINCIPLAS
AND EIGHT ARE ALTERNATES. MOREOVER, THE APRIL 14 STATEMENT
WAS NOT AN OFFICIAL EXPRESSION OF THE DLA BUT, RATHER HAS BEEN
AN EMBARRASSMENT TO IT.

3. ON APRIL 23 THE DLA ISSUED AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT WHICH HAS
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EFFECT OF REBUTTING THE EARLIER UNOFFICIAL STATEMENT AS WELL AS LOPEZ' CLAIM TO MAJORITY SUPPORT OF THE DLA. THE APRIL 23 STATEMENT DECLARES THE " UNBREAKABLE IMPARTIALITY" OF THE DLA CONCERNING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES, CITING THE GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY THE " DIRECTOR UNICO", CARLOS LLERAS RESTREPO. THE NEW STATEMENT RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE DLA TO STATE THEIR PERSONAL PREFERENCES CONCERNING CANDIDATES BUT INSISTS THAT THE DLA AS SUCH MUST BE NEUTRAL.

4. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, SIX OF THE ELEVEN PRINCIPALS OF THE DLA VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE APRIL 23 STATEMENT, INCLUDING TWO WHO HAD ALSO SIGNED THE EARLIER STATEMENT. FOUR PRINCIPALS ABSTAINED FROM THE APRIL 23 STATEMENT AS DID ONE ALTERNATE WHO WAS IN THIS CASE LEGITIMATELY REPRESENTING AN ABSENT PRINCIPAL.

5. THUS, THE DLA IS NOW OFFICIALLY ON RECORD AS BEING IMPARTIAL CONCERNING THE LIBERAL PARTY PRE- CANDIDATES. HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT POLEMIC BETWEEN CARLOS LLERAS AND LOPEZ THAT NEUTRALITY TENDS TO FAVOR THE LLERAS POSITION AND, AT LEAST, CONTRADICTS LOPEZ' CLAIMS OF MAJORITY SUPPORT FROM THE DLA. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE UNOFFICIAL APRIL 14 STATEMENT AND THE CLOSENESS OF THE VOTE ON THE APRIL 23 STATEMENT REVEAL STRONG LOPEZ SUPPORT IN THE HIGHEST ECHELONS OF THE ANTIOQUIAN LIBERAL PARTY.
COOPER

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